A Story Against Women

BY DONN BYRNE

The Blood of Kings, the Sport of Kings

AT any Irish race course you would have seen him some years ago, and you could not have missed him. There is your assemblage in the small ring, as it is called—owners, sportsmen, officials; immaculately dressed men, with glasses slung over their shoulders; gentlewomen with bronzed faces and kneen eyes and clothes which but a week ago were on show in Paris; farmers in gaiters and black coats and bowler hats; bookmakers, hoarse with shouting the odds. Green turf and horses sleek and groomed like prima donnas. A race is over, the jockeys have weighed in, the bets are paid. And now the board goes up with the runners of the next race on it and the names of their riders. A bookie raises his voice defiantly. He will give two to one against the field, he says. He will give four to one, bar one. He will give eight to one, bar two.

Around each gambler is a willing crowd offering money—small tradesmen; strong farmers, peeling off notes from plethoric rolls; Irish peers in shabby tweeds, with faces red as bartenders'; an occasional clergyman, and Rory O'Connor Mellon.

Consider a rather tubby man with a sharp-pointed red beard which has strands of gray in it. On his head is a not well brushed silk hat. He wears a frock coat of the type known in America as a Prince Albert, and it is not very well brushed, either. His collar is of the turned-down fashion, which I have heard somewhere described as a Shakespeare collar. His tie is black. In his left hand he holds a not well rolled umbrella. In his right hand he holds a pair of field glasses. His pocket bulges with the form book.

He had been born some forty-seven years before this in an obscure village in Meath, on the edge of the Irish central plain. Bog land it is all, and under the peat of Allen lie buried the Irish elk, and the Irish bear, and the Irish wolf, and the wolf dog that hunted him, and the gallant invaders of old-time—the brown Phenicians, and the red Danes, and black-a-vised Norman men. And around the edges of royal Meath live traditions and customs and families ancient as Allen's bog itself. Some strange preservative arises from the black peat water and hardens them to the consistency of bog oak. But a wind from the west brings the salt Atlantic with it and warps them and dwarfs them and brings them to the stage of some mossy ancient hawthorn bush. Where is the white knight? Where is the black knight? What of the end of great Thane O'Neill, who fought Queen Elizabeth and won—fought her who had vanquished Philip's armada? Everywhere old kings vanish into a dim, aromatic past.

But the greatest of all the Irish names remained—O'Melaghlin (Mellon now)—the last legal high kings of Ireland, sons of that Malachi who repulsed the red Danes and wore, Thomas Moore writes of him—

* * * * "the collar of gold
That he won from the proud invader."

Beside Malachi, Brian Boru was an upstart Irish Napoleon, and Rory O'Connor, the last king was a guerilla chief. The blood of Rory of the Hills was in Mellon's veins, too, though on the feminine, or distaff, side, to be technical.

So you can understand O'Connor Mellon, last of Malachi's high line, and in whose veins ran the blood of Rory of the Hills, dressing himself in ceremonial black to keep a little dignity, and betting cautiously, professionally, on the race course to get a little money.

* * * *

HE had passed through some small schools and passed unnoted through Trinity. Who will note even an heir of kings in a university which claims Swift and Congreve, Burke and Oliver Goldsmith and lians of newer fame? And, coming out, some political friend obtained for him the post of coroner in one of the districts of Dublin.

For how many years O'Connor Mellon held the post of coroner in south, east or west Dublin it would be hard to say—these soft, gray lives flow up so quietly. But suddenly, dramatically, he resigned his position.

When you suddenly see a respectable coroner in sober clothes resign his position and in the same sober clothes take to backing horses for a living, your Anglo-Saxon mind would call him mad. We more subtle Celts will say he has resigned himself to destiny and the laws of chance.

Not for nothing has racing been called the sport of kings. Where is such majesty, where such fleetness, where such uncertainty? The thrill as the starter pulls the lever and the tapes fly up, and "They're off" rings from a thousand throats. Ah, the minute—the bonny minute—with the blood in one's veins humming like wireless!

How could the strain of Malachi, the high king, and of Rory of the Hills keep from the excitement of this speed and glory? And in spite of chance and by dint of forethought and by sheer knowledge of the game O'Connor Mellon made £2,000 a year.

He lived modestly, but he lived well. Near Rathfarnham, in Dublin, he had a comfortable whitewashed and well thatched cottage that looked toward Three Rock mountain. An old housekeeper took care of him. There was a small flagged garden, with forget-me-nots springing between the stones; around him the glory of the circle of mountains—in winter their white caps of snow or mist, in summer their brown heads and tinkling heather—the Doder, at the foot of his garden, rambling carelessly toward Donnybrook and the Irish sea, a happy, singing river, hurdling grassing weirs. His home life was very comfortable but for one thing—he had never been married. Every natural man marries, and afterward either likes or doesn't like his wife—but that doesn't matter. Those who don't marry fail because of timidity or vanity. O'Connor Mellon was of the timid kind.

So his heart never fluttered, nor did his ideas take a concrete matrimonial direction until he met Mrs. Peggey O'Shaughnessy of New York.

He met her in the grand stand at the Curragh races—a pert, black-eyed woman of about forty, with a merry smile and a merry manner. She wore a Paris frock and a black hat—black as her eyes, with cherries on it, dark red as her small mouth. Everything about her was ship-shape and trim, from her well cared for teeth to her well cared for finger nails. A friend introduced him, asking him to mark some winners on her race card, and he came only dubiously, shyly, and not at all pleased.

A smile, and he was stunned; a word, and his head was swimming; a hand on his sleeve, and he was gone. The battle with the bookmakers was forgotten while he explained weights and pace to her, colors, trainers and owners, and while he went to place her bets, equaling 50 cents or $1. Everything he was possessed of he gave her that afternoon—time, knowledge, hospitality—in a grave, unostentatious way.

* * * *

WHEN he got back to Rathfarnham that night her vision remained with him—the chic clothes, the merry, smiling face; the trim figure, and that most suitable age for him, a forty that an enthusiast might take for thirty-two.

You would have thought, with the pleasant house he had and the race meetings he went to, that he would have been happy here—happy as an otter in the river, as a bird in a high oak tree. But he had hidden in that sandy-red face of his a big ambition. Once to every business man, to every general officer, to every racing specialist, comes an opportunity that, taken, swings onward to the heights. A horse rolls home at a hundred to one, and this is not always chance, but shrewd racing; preparation for years and secrecy. Sometimes you can even get better odds if the bookmaker is caught napping. And O'Connor Mellon often dreamed of the time when he would get wind of a job of this sort, come in on it for a good round sum, and be settled for life.

Between himself and the Irish bookies was enmity. The bookies don't like punters of O'Connor Mellon's type. They know as much as the bookies do, and more. To pay O'Connor Mellon a certain fixed sum every year—and to pay it as certainly as to pay taxes—was no pleasure at all. Of the Irish bookmakers the biggest was Patsy Regan.

If only Mellon could get on the perfect job, he promised himself he would take the shoes off Patsy Regan. And it he did.

Then he would revive the title of baronet his grandfather dropped because of poverty—Sir Rory O'Connor Mellon he would be then, and an owner instead of merely a punter. He would have his horses at stable in England and a few horses in Ireland. He had dreams, too, for rebuilding the battered old house in Meath and tilling the few tired acres and buying a field here and a field there until he had a little estate, not much, but such as a country gentleman of the old school would have. And there were other plans he had. He wished to travel a little. And he flattered himself he would give a dignified account of the last of the old Irish royal house.

All these things were possible, given the racing job. And the racing job would come, he knew, so long as he kept his ears cocked, his eyes open, his mind keen. But now there had come between his eyes and this concrete ambition the merry, black-eyed smile, the trim figure and the perfect suitable age of Mrs. Peggy O'Shaughnessy.

On 5th avenue in New York she had one of those small shops where the smaller the shop the dearer the commodity. There was her Christian name above the door—just "Peggy"—and in the window were a woman's frock here and a woman's hat there, and somewhere a sheaf of wheat, or a bunch of posies, or some gadget of that kind. Though the hat and frock were perfect and most extraordinarily expensive, for customers Peggy never lacked. She had come to America at the age of ten, and now, at the age of forty, which an optimist might take for thirty-two, she was revisiting the land of her birth.

She had set out to make a conquest of O'Connor Mellon, because, first, he was so woman-shy, and, second, because he was a figure about Dublin—a queer, romantic figure. There was something so grotesque about him and yet so dignified. You might smile at O'Connor Mellon, but you would never laugh.

He, in turn, loved her breeziness, her worldliness, her outright American way. She had been to Paris, to the Riviera, to the United Hunts meetings in America. Beside her in knowledge and experience he was a child.

* * * *

SHE went up with some of her friends to have tea in that little cottage in Rathfarnham, and surely never in the annals of Irish royalty were so many pains taken, so little expense. Dublin had been ransacked for delicacies; friends' cellars for old wines. Strawberries had been wired across to Devonshire for because she said the first strawberies of the season were a great occasion to her. They were there for her, with cream of the Irish kine. And primroses such as bloom only on the slopes of Three Rock for her.

All that dark, cool house, that mellow furniture, great fireplaces and small shining windows came to her heart and throat as lavender comes to the nostrils—the little garden outside, fresh with mountain rain and many flowers, and below it the tinkling Dodder.

"I could be very happy here," she said, and she winked a tear away, and then, like the brave, sensible little woman she was, she put sentiment aside. She had given it its deserved tribute. She got down quick to O'Connor Mellon's affairs. She had heard, she said, he was a baronet.

"Yes," he admitted, without enthusiasm.

"You are Sir Rory O'Connor Mellon?"

"Well, yes."

"Why don't you call yourself that?"

He hummed and he hawed. What's the use of being a baronet if you haven't enough money to baronet on?

"I'm going to call you Sir Rory," Mrs. Peggy O'Shaughnessy said, "and your're going to call me Mrs. Peggy. If you had a wife," she mused, "she would be Lady O'Connor Mellon, wouldn't she?"

"Yes, yes—well, yes."

"A nice name," said Mrs. Peggy O'Shaughnessy.

She told him about her own business in New York, but she was quite modest about it. She gave a good deal of the credit to an employe of hers—a Mr. Cecil, no second name, just Mr. Cecil. Mr. Cecil was a chic young man, an English younger son, it was whispered, and absolutely the hairy ape when it came to hat-making. O'Connor Mellon wasn't very much interested in him.

When she and her friends were gone he thought over two of her sayings—that she could be happy there with the peace of Three Rock coming down on her like a blessing, and that Lady O'Connor Mellon was a nice name. He looked at himself in the glass, critically, appraisingly.

He was passing down Dodder banks one sunlit May morning when he met the Whisperer Murphy sitting by one of the weirs. The Whisperer was an aged, white-haired man with a bloodshot eye, and a brown derby on the side of his head. He was a horse doctor of an irregular school, never having entered a veterinary college. But he had "the gift," as the Irish say, and many a veterinary surgeon sent for him when in a fix. The peasantry believed he had bargained his soul away to the devil for power over horses.

"Mr. Mellon," he called, "would you tell me something?"

O'Connor Mellon considered a moment.

"I would," he said.

"Would you throw back your mind now and tell me?"

"I would," decided O'Connor Mellon.

"Did you ever hear of a Derby winner coming out of a fish dealer's shop?"

"I did not," said O'Connor Mellon.

"Would you think it possible, now?"

"I would not."

"Did you ever see lightning?"

"I did."

"I've seen a filly that's faster," said the Whisperer Murphy.

* * * *

LITTLE by little the story came out. Some English country gentleman had died, and the next of kin was a distant relative who kept a fishmonger's shop in Bristol. The deceased squire had left hardly anything when all was settled. But among the effects was a filly he had bought at Doncaster and made an engagement on behalf of for the Derby. The fishmonger had sold all the effects and kept the filly. He had a stable made for her back of the fishmonger's shop, and a pal of his who kept a saloon and had been an old jockey in his time was training her.

"There's few as knows about it, and them as knows is laughing. But she'll win the Derby. She'll walk it."

"I can't believe it," said O'Connor Mellon.

"Would you tell me something, Mr. Mellon?"

"I would."

"Am I, or am I not, the Whisperer Murphy?"

It should have been enough for St. Thomas. It was enough for O'Connor Mellon.

He trotted back to Rathfarnham, hardly able to contain himself. The job—the perfect job! He fumbled among papers, and at last found the runners and the betting at the London clubs. The Derby stakes, for three-year-olds, £10,745, one mile four furlongs. There was the favorite at fours, Pentagon. There were Fair Lassie, Straightaway, Stamford Pride, at tens. Came the notable outsiders at thirty-three to one, headed by Dick Donovan's beautiful bay gelding, Ulster Bachelor. A few at sixty to one, like Sir Mick Jameson's mare, Victory Boy. Where was this Bluebell, anyway? Ah, others, a hundred to one—Rascality, Irish Piety, Bluebell.

He looked her up in the entries—she wasn't in the form book. Mr. Arthur Balfour William's Bluebell, by Roi Bleu out of Songstress, trained by B. Evans. He had never heard of the owner, never heard of the trainer. The sire and dam were well known to him—great blood there. But there were accidents of blood in horses as well as in the best families. No wonder the filly was a hundred to one—a fishmonger's entry for the Derby! Why, you could write your own ticket.

"YOU ARE SIR RORY O'CONNOR MELLON?"
"WELL, YES."
"WHY DON'T YOU CALL YOURSELF THAT?"

In himself, and even outside of himself, forces were pushing him.

"Go ahead! You've got it—the perfect job!" Destiny caught him by the shoulder and shook him. "Man, here it is at last."

Seeing now that the Derby was only two days away, if he were going to put on his money it should be this afternoon or at latest tomorrow morning, before any possible information could trickle into Regan's office. The Whisperer was usually drunk as a fish, but one could never be too careful. Three days from now, his old heart hoped, he would be in possession of a fortune.

This afternoon he would draw £300 from the bank and go down and draw Regan in his native den. But he couldn't this afternoon. He had an appointment in town with Mrs. Peggy O'Shaughnessy. Well, then, tomorrow morning.

* * * *

AT 3 o'clock he called for her to take her to the Hibernian, and he noticed as she shook hands a queer, warm, personal touch about her. She seemed to want to be closer to him. She was so handsome, such a fine woman, so splendidly, correctly dressed, his heart throbbed a little with pride to see that all in the room were watching—the men with unconcealed admiration, the women with shrewd appreciation of her clothes. After tea they went into St. Stephen's Green, he more led by than going with her. She had seemed preoccupied all afternoon. She drew figures in the gravel with the end of her sunshade.

"Sir Rory," she said suddenly, "are we good enough friends for me to say something disagreeable to you?"

"Why—why, yes—yes, Mrs. Peggy," he said.

"Are you sure, Sir Rory?" Her voice was very sincere.

"I'm very sure, Mrs. Peggy," he answered promptly.

"Sir Rory," she said, "I like you. I cannot tell you how much I like you. There is something in you that just—just gets me. You are such a fine man, so well bred, so chivalrous——"

"No, no, no!" he exclaimed embarrassedly.

"Yes, indeed, Sir Rory," she insisted. "I know men. But there is just one thing," she added.

"And that?"

"This horrible gambling," she told him.

He looked at her, not understanding.

"Sir Rory, it's a terrible, insidious vice."

He was inarticulate. To call betting on horses in Ireland a vice is as strange as calling the golden Irish whisky with its odor of heather and burnt turf the drug alcohol.

"Please, Sir Rory, please! For a friends' sake, for my sake, couldn't you give it up? I lie awake nights thinking of it," she said.

He could find nothing to say.

"Couldn't you, Sir Rory? Won't you?"

She turned around to him, and his heart all but broke. There were tears in her eyes. There were tears on her face.

"Why, yes," he said. "Of course I could—I will. Please, Mrs. Peggy, for God's sake, don't cry. I will!"

He leaned over and patted her hand clumsily, produced a great red silk handkerchief, which he thrust on her clumsily.

"Dear Mrs. Peggy, of course I will give it up."

"You make me so happy!" she said. "I can't tell you how happy you would make me."

"There's just a little bet on the Derby," he faltered.

"No, no, Sir Rory."

"It's not exactly gambling."

"Be a man, Sir Rory. Put it aside."

"But——"

She turned away with a little hopeless gesture. Once more came the honest, sincere tears.

"I won't bet," said O'Connor Mellon. She turned to him, radiant.

"Then on Derby day," she said, "just to keep your mind off it, we'll go for a day away. We'll drive through Phoenix park and see the red deer, and go to the strawberry beds, and see old Lucan. Will you, Sir Rory?"

"It is you who make me happy."

* * * *

THEY were both happy that afternoon. They wandered about like children—she, happy with the consciousness of a good deed done, he happy to be with her. She ventured to tell him how distinguished, how commanding he would look—"Don't think me impertinent, Sir Rory!"—if he requisitioned a good tailor and a barber who understood. If he could only see Mr. Cecil, he was so smart. She liked smart men. Everybody should be smart. A man should make as much of himself as a woman does of herself. Why not?

Only in Dublin city could this phenomenon be accomplished so rapidly—the emergence of the gayly-clad, prospective bridegroom from the drab chrysalis of the grub bachelor.

They fitted O'Connor Mellon out on the spot with a gray morning coat and gray vest and a pair of striped trousers such as are worn at better-class weddings. A barber had trimmed his hair and brought the beard to a point at which an Elizabethan courtier would wear it. A gray soft felt hat gave him the appearance of an explorer. Gloves and spats and that Malacca stick with a gold top, such as papa and mamma present you with, suitably inscribed, when you dash heroically into three feet of water and rescue young Horatio from the briny deep.

He was happy going to meet her in the motor car he had hired for the day. Occasionally a twinge came to him as he thought of Epsom Downs and the horses being saddled for the greatest racing event of the year.

Well, O'Connor Mellon thought, there was an imperfection about the perfect job. Sometimes it didn't come off. Whatever Regan would pay him would not be worth his Peggy as a wife.

She was dressed when he called for her in a costume of white flannel and a red blouse with queer Russian embroidery on it, and her white hat had red in its cunningly. The dark, merry, Irish eyes, the black Irish hair—you would have taken fifteen years off her age but for the pleasant substantiality of her figure. They rolled through the park, green with June. His own clothes brought forth delighted phrases from her.

"Never, never let me see you in that dreadful frock coat and dreadful silk hat again! Oh, I wish Mr. Cecil could see you!" she said.

They had lunch at a little hotel in Lucan, where they were received with that Masonic understanding smile that a couple who are obviously courting seem to evoke everywhere. The waiter was so overcome with emotion that he had to have two stiff taggeens of whisky before he could bring himself to the sordid business of serving the salmon. By now they were walking the sleek three-year-olds in the paddock at Epsom. For-

AT ANY IRISH RACECOURSE YOU COULD HAVE SEEN HIM SOME YEARS AGO, AND YOU COULD NOT HAVE MISSED HIM.

tunes were being laid and taken, but O'Connor Mellon had thought only for Mrs. Peggy's eyes. He might have been eating a crust in a pub instead of a decent lunch in the spa at Lucan, so little attention did he pay to it, such were her eyes.

* * * *

AFAR off on Epsom Downs was mad excitement as the horses turned Tattenham corner for the flash home, while roars came from the throats of the kings, peers and commons of England, and the brown mass swept forward, jockeys with silken jackets, horses with silken coats. Eh, so far away, of so little consequence in the golden Irish afternoon.

There fell between O'Connor Mellon and Mrs. Peggy O'Shaughnessy one of those distressing silences that occur before important things are said. She was troubled, watching the river. He was troubled, finding words.

"Mrs. Peggy," he said, "you mentioned you like the place at Rathfarnham."

"Yes, Sir Rory." Hr browns were frowning. She was troubled.

"And you liked the name—Lady O'Connor Mellon?"

"Please, Sir Rory—please!" She was distressed. She was red in the face—ashamed.

"Mrs. Peggy," he went on, "would you do my poor house, and my poor honors, and my poor self the compliment of taking us?"

The gray hat was in his hand, the gray eyes looked at her sincerely. An air of simple majesty was about him. He stood there, a very upright, a very noble Irish gentleman.

"Sir Rory," she said, "I should have told you before. I have often said to myself I should have told you before, but I am—I am married now." She was very ashamed, very perturbed. "I had no right to keep it a secret like that."

If you were watching him very closely, which she was not, you would have noticed how stricken he was, how white his face became. The eyelids blinked rapidly for an instant.

"Dear madam," he said softly, "anything you wished to keep secret, surely you had a right to do it."

"It was this way, Sir Rory—Mr. Cecil and I, on account of the business, and also," she said coyly, "because we were attracted toward each other, got married. And, you know, Sir Rory, when a man like Mr. Cecil is known to be married he loses his influence with the female clientele, so we keep it a secret."

"I'm afraid I know very little about business," said O'Connor Mellon deprecatingly. "But I wish you and Mr. Cecil immense happiness," he said, "and much prosperity."

"It is so good of you to take it that way, Sir Rory"—she was grateful—"and I shall never, never forget the honor you have done me."

"Not much honor, dear madam. The house is so small a one, and the title so common, and as for myself——"

"As for yourself, Sir Rory," said Mrs. Peggy O'Shaughnessy sincerely, "I shall always remember you as the finest man—outside Mr. Cecil, of course—that I have ever known. You are going to be a great man some of these days, Sir Rory, and when you are I am going to take a little credit to myself for it," she smiled, "because it will have been I who stopped you in this madness of gambling, which was ruining your character," she uttered softly, and then shrewdly, "and impoverishing you."

* * * *

HE saw her home to Drumcondra and bade her farewell and was proceeding to Rathfarnham himself, very stricken and a little dazed, when he felt he would rather be walking than riding in hypocritical state to the great, solomn car. So, getting out and paying the man, he went ahead down Sackville street, past O'Connell's gaudy monument. A newsboy came dashing along as he put foot on the gray bridge that spans the Liffey.

"Th' outsider wins! T' outsider wins!" the boy was shouting.

O'Connor Mellon fumbled with a penny and took the racing special from the boy. "Hundred to One Shot Takes Derby Stakes!" The headlines punched him right in the heart. "Fishmonger's Filly Canters the Course!"

He went and rested his elbows on the gray granite of the bridge. Citizens passed him to and fro. Beneath the bridge the seagulls hovered, and gray Anna Liffey rolled onward to the sea, and Guinness' little barges puffed along merrily, laden with their cargoes of brown, foaming porter.

A furtive breeze sent the racing paper down toward the custom house. His hands grew lax, and the yellow gloves he was holding in them dropped into the river, to be investigated by the querulous gulls. The stick followed, tip foremost, with a plud. A second breeze whipped down Bachelors' Walk and sent the gray hat skimming down the gray waters. O'Connor Mellon never noticed. Oh, it was too much—too much!

Two jackeens of the race track passed. One wore cap and collar, the other hat and muffler. Hat and Muffled nudged his fellow sportsman.

"Je see that?" he asked.

"Did I see what?"

"Ould O'Connor Mellon, and him drunk as a jook."

"Je tell me so? I t'ought that one never took a dhrop."

"Didn't I see him wid me own two eyes, and the tears running into his ould red whiskers?"

"I heerd tell, I heerd tell somewhere," said Cap and Collar, "that that one was a rale ould Irish king."

"Irish king, me elbow!" said Hat and Muffler. "Rale ould Irish dhrunk!"

(Copyright, 1924.)

40 Years as Policeman Brings Contact With Important Figures

SERGT. W. W. EASLEY, recently retired after forty years on the Capital police force, has a memory replete with interesting events of official and unofficial Washington. Entering the department at the age of twenty-two years, he has spent his days in this service.

Forty years of arduous duty, generously sprinkled with hair-raising experiences, have dealt kindly with the sergeant. He doesn't at all look as if he were ready to be "laid on the shelf," but, as he points out, the younger generation coming on must have their innings, and he is quite ready to sit back and watch the march of events from the sidelines.

Up to three years ago, when Easley was made sergeant of the guard at the White House, his duty was that of mounted policeman, and most of his assignments were in the Tenleytown district, where his genial personality and quiet forcefulness have made him well loved by all.

Perhaps the most exciting incident of the sergeant's career was the capture of "Jack the Slasher," a criminal of peculiar tendencies, who ravaged the countryside for many months before his capture was effected. All this happened some thirty years ago, but the memory of that wild night remains fresh with the captor.

For some time the police had been baffled by the operations of a thief who not only stole everything of value in sight but took a fiendish delight in destroying what he could not carry away. Clothes, draperies, rugs, etc., would be found by the owners slashed and cut almost beyond recognition.

Returning from duty one night, Easley and a fellow officer thought they glimpsed a shadow on the porch of a house they were passing. They decided to investigate, approached the house from different directions and succeeded in putting a man to flight, when the sergeant nabbed him.

Ignorant of the fact that they had hauled in any one more important than an ordinary thief, they took him to the station house, where only a short time previously a robbery had been reported in the neighborhood, carrying all the earmarks of the "Slasher's" work. It was very difficult to get the prisoner to talk, but it was finally established that he was guilty, and he was convicted and sentenced to thirty years.

He was probably the cleverest crook of his time in this locality, though in appearance most insignificant, being described as a "squint-eyed, skinny little negro." However, he worked a clever and profitable game for some time. It was his custom to carry his plunder to his uncle, near Richmond, who disposed of it there, after holding it for a brief period for safety, when Jack would collect the cash and add it to a rapidly growing bank account.

During the time when President Cleveland was in the White House Sergt. Easley was detailed as special guard at the Executive's home, Woodley, and the memory of those days lingers as one of the pleasantest of all his forty years of service. That was in the days before secret service men and motor cycle cops, and it was Easley's duty to follow the President's carriage to and from his office and to stand guard over the home during the day.

Many happy hours he spent in the beautiful grounds surrounding the mansion, and often he had for company the two little daughters of the President, Ruth and Ethel, both of whom he speaks of with fond devotion.

To Mrs. Cleveland he pays the highest tribute: "She was always gracious and friendly and treated all with whom she came in contact with the same gentle thoughtfulness, it made no difference whether one was a cabinet officer or policeman."

Occupying a conspicuous place in his room is a large picture of the lovely former "first lady," which one knows at once is one of his most cherished possessions.

One of the first things that meet the eye on entering the sergeant's sunny room is a framed and autographed picture of the late Warren G. Harding, and his gesture in calling attention to it and the tones of his voice when speaking of him denote deference and devotion to his former chief. He says:

"He was always jolly, and genial, and considerate, and kind to all with whom he had to deal. The whole police force and secret service men stationed at the Executive Mansion were devoted to him. Never was there a bluer lot of men than when the news came of his death."

It is not difficult to understand why Sergt. Easley is a favorite with his fellow officers, as well as claiming many friends outside the service, in and about the Capital, among persons with whom he has come in contact officially or unofficially in his forty years as trustee and guardian of the law. His philosophy of enforcing the law is tempered with irresistible good nature. Thus his creed: "It is all in knowing how to handle them. It's easier to give them a smile than a frown, and most of the time it brings quicker and better results."